

STATE OF MAINE
PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

Docket No. 96-900

December 2, 1998

PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION
NYNEX School and Library Project

ORDER

WELCH, Chairman; NUGENT and DIAMOND, Commissioners

I. SUMMARY

In this Order, we allow schools and libraries with a demonstrated or reliably predicted need for a faster speed connection to the Internet to obtain a T-1 connection, as part of the Maine School Library Network.

II. DISCUSSION

In August of 1998, we directed our School and Library Network Advisory Board to determine which schools and libraries were experiencing significant speed problems due to the size of their 56 kbps connection to the Internet. We further asked the Board to identify sites with specific plans (with funding in place) that would likely exceed their 56 kbp capacity within the next 18 months. We asked the Board to determine the cost of upgrades for these sites.

On November 25, 1998, the Board submitted its proposal for bandwidth expansion. The Board identified 271 site that were regularly exceeding the capacity of a 56 kbps connection.

Under the Board's proposal these sites would be eligible for a free 384 kbps or T-1 connection, depending on their level of usage. Sites would be responsible for their own site specific costs. This could include a router or CSU/DSU (a modem-like devise used to transfer data in excess of 56 kbps) to support the higher speed connection. There also may be expenses to upgrade the service entrance and additional inside wire. These costs are estimated to be \$1000 - \$3000 per site and would be paid for by the site.¹

¹These services qualify for E-Rate support and schools and libraries could apply for E-Rate discounts for site-specific equipment.

Bell Atlantic estimates that these proposed upgrades, along with changes in the Network backbone to support the upgrade, will cost approximately \$1,935,000.

III. DECISION

We approve the proposal submitted by the Board with one change. The Board proposed providing 384 connections to sites with demonstrated high usage (peaks over 40 kbps for 15 minutes on 3 days a month or peaks over 40 kbps for 15 minutes at least 6 times a month) and a T-1 to sites demonstrating very high usage (peaks over 50 kbps for 15 minutes 3 times or more per day in an average month, has more than 50 computer connected and sustains an average bit rate of over 10 kbps per month). We understand that Bell Atlantic will incur the same incremental out-of-pocket costs whether it installs a 384 or T-1 connection. This raises the issue of whether distinguishing between the high users and very high users is necessary. The 384 simply acts as a "choke" or the T-1 connection. Using 384's has the advantage of providing more predictability for growing the backbone. On the other hand, there will likely be costs associated with changing a 384 to a T-1, in the event a site's usage increases to the very high user category. On balance, it appears installing T-1's for both categories of users would be most efficient, less costly in the long run and easier to administer and explain to participants. Therefore, the proposal will be revised so that those qualifying for both "high" speed and "very high" speed connections will be eligible for a T-1. If the Board identifies additional costs or other problems with this change, they should notify the Commission and we will reconsider our decision.

Accordingly, we

O R D E R

That the Increase in Bandwidth Proposal dated November 24, 1998, and attached as Attachment 1 to this Order, is approved with the change discussed in the body of this Order.

Dated at Augusta, Maine, this 2nd day of December,
1998.

BY ORDER OF THE COMMISSION

Dennis L. Keschl
Administrative Director

COMMISSIONERS VOTING FOR: Welch
 Nugent
 Diamond

NOTICE OF RIGHTS TO REVIEW OR APPEAL

5 M.R.S.A. § 9061 requires the Public Utilities Commission to give each party to an adjudicatory proceeding written notice of the party's rights to review or appeal of its decision made at the conclusion of the adjudicatory proceeding. The methods of review or appeal of PUC decisions at the conclusion of an adjudicatory proceeding are as follows:

1. Reconsideration of the Commission's Order may be requested under Section 1004 of the Commission's Rules of Practice and Procedure (65-407 C.M.R.110) within 20 days of the date of the Order by filing a petition with the Commission stating the grounds upon which reconsideration is sought.
2. Appeal of a final decision of the Commission may be taken to the Law Court by filing, within 30 days of the date of the Order, a Notice of Appeal with the Administrative Director of the Commission, pursuant to 35-A M.R.S.A. § 1320 (1)-(4) and the Maine Rules of Civil Procedure, Rule 73 et seq.
3. Additional court review of constitutional issues or issues involving the justness or reasonableness of rates may be had by the filing of an appeal with the Law Court, pursuant to 35-A M.R.S.A. § 1320 (5).

Note:The attachment of this Notice to a document does not indicate the Commission's view that the particular document may be subject to review or appeal. Similarly, the failure of the Commission to attach a copy of this Notice to a document does not indicate the Commission's view that the document is not subject to review or appeal.